

Thursday, April 23, 2009

Continues Fight for a Greener Chicago

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (D-IL) wrapped up his first week in Congress collaborating with U.S. Representative Mark Kirk (R-IL) to cosponsor an amendment to the National Water Research and Development Initiative Act (WRDA). The Kirk/Quigley amendment, which requires projections of long-term water levels for major bodies of water, including the Great Lakes, passed the U.S. House of Representatives today by voice vote.

“The Great Lakes provide drinking water to over 40 million people and 90% of the U.S. water supply,” said Quigley. “Urban sprawl and the air and water pollution that comes with it, is putting an enormous stress on the fragile ecosystems of the Great Lakes. Knowing the projected change in water levels for years to come will allow us to put plans in place to fight the negative effects of global climate change.”

Currently, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and the Army Core only project lake levels for one year. One year is not enough time to determine the systemic changes that come with decreasing water levels. This critical addition to the WRDA bill will allow for comprehensive projections and will help us understand the long-term ramifications of climate change so that Congress can take informed and science-based action to address climate change.

“Our city depends on the health of the Great Lakes – unlike oil, there are no alternatives to water,” said Quigley. “As Cook County Commissioner, I fought to make our city a cleaner, more environmentally friendly city, and in Congress, I am proudly continuing that fight.”

Congressman Quigley is a proven environmental leader. As Cook County Commissioner, Quigley was recognized by the Chicago Reader as “arguably the greenest elected official in Chicago.” As a Cook County Commissioner, he co-sponsored legislation that committed Cook County to join the Chicago Climate Exchange, he spearheaded the movement to require all new facilities to meet the LEED standards developed by the U.S. Green Buildings Council, and he advocated for the protection of the Cook County Forest Preserve District.